

Exclusion from School: compounding or tackling inequality?

Dr Gillean McCluskey
University of Edinburgh

Aims today

‘Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting’

- Contexts: political and policy background in Wales
- Core issues
- Research aims
- Methods
- Draft Findings
- Emerging issues and questions

Context

- Political context
 - Devolution in Wales 1999
 - Labour Government
 - Culture and language
- Policy background
 - Explicit commitment to children's rights
 - Explicit commitment to raising achievement in education
- Core issues

Wales: Background

- Largely agricultural economy
- Population – 3 million
- Official languages; Welsh, English (around 20% Welsh speakers)
- Highest proportion of UK children living in severe poverty (NAW 2011)
- Higher proportion of 25-64 year olds with low or no qualifications than both the OECD average and the UK overall.
- Mean scores for both reading and mathematics for 15 year olds below the OECD average
- Higher proportion than the OECD average of young people not in education, employment or training.

Political priorities



First Minister: Carwyn Jones. He is a member of Amnesty International, Unison, Unite and the Fabian Society. He has been a Labour Party member since 1987 and played an active role in the 'Yes for Wales' campaign to extend the law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales. He is a fluent Welsh speaker.

Children's Rights in Wales

- First UK Government to enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in its own legislation

Exclusion: the issues in Wales

- unlawful exclusion
- Disproportionate rates of exclusion for some groups of young people
- an unacceptably wide degree of variation in provision for those excluded from school
- poor educational outcomes
- lack of reintegration into school
- inappropriate use of physical intervention and restraint
 - (Butler, 2011, Estyn 2011, 2012, Welsh Assembly Government 2008, 2011)

Research Aims

- evaluation of the exclusion process
- an evaluation of the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside of the school setting
- make recommendations for policy development

Methods

- Statistical and policy analysis of publicly available data
- interviews with key informants
- a survey of local authorities
- interviews with children and young people, their families and a range of professionals working to support them in education settings outside mainstream schools.

Participants

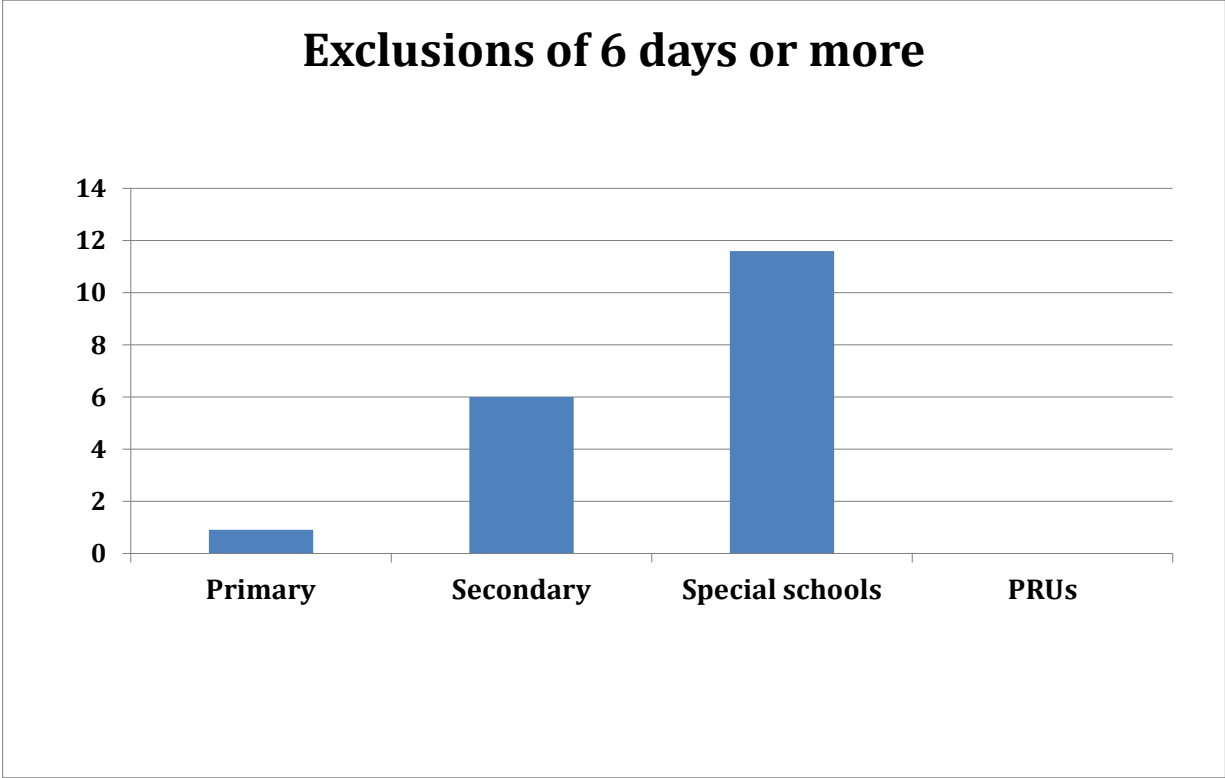
Participants in the Research

Key stakeholders	16
Local authority personnel	26
Children and young people	48
Parents/carers	15
Professionals working with children and young people	51
Total	156

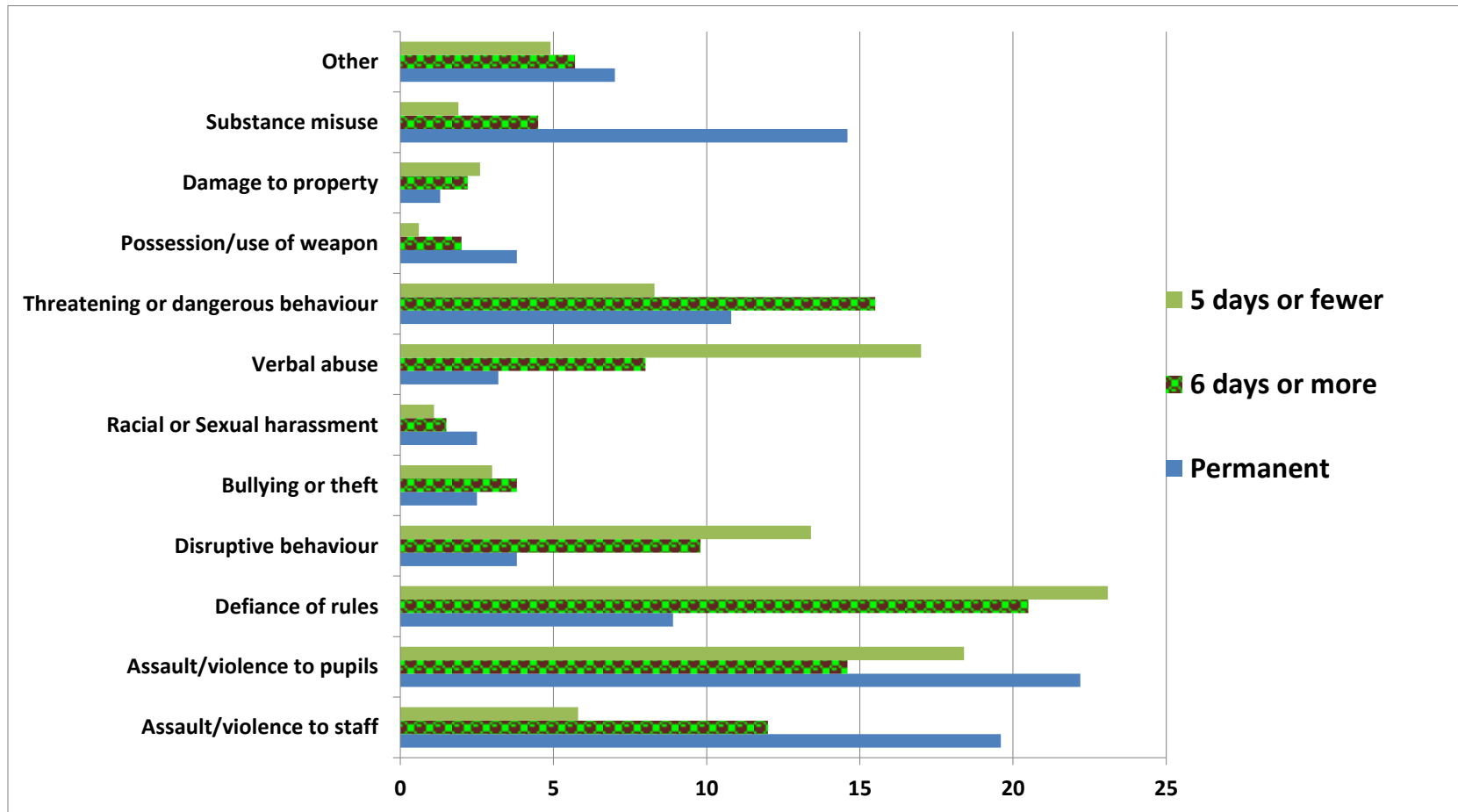
Findings: Exclusion

- Rates of permanent exclusion are decreasing but...
- Illegal exclusion still happening
- Reasons given for exclusion problematic
- Some children missing
- Lack of focus on reintegration
- Some groups excluded more than others
- Parents often felt exclusion process was unfair and complex

Exclusions of 6 days or more by sector, rate per 1000, 2010-11



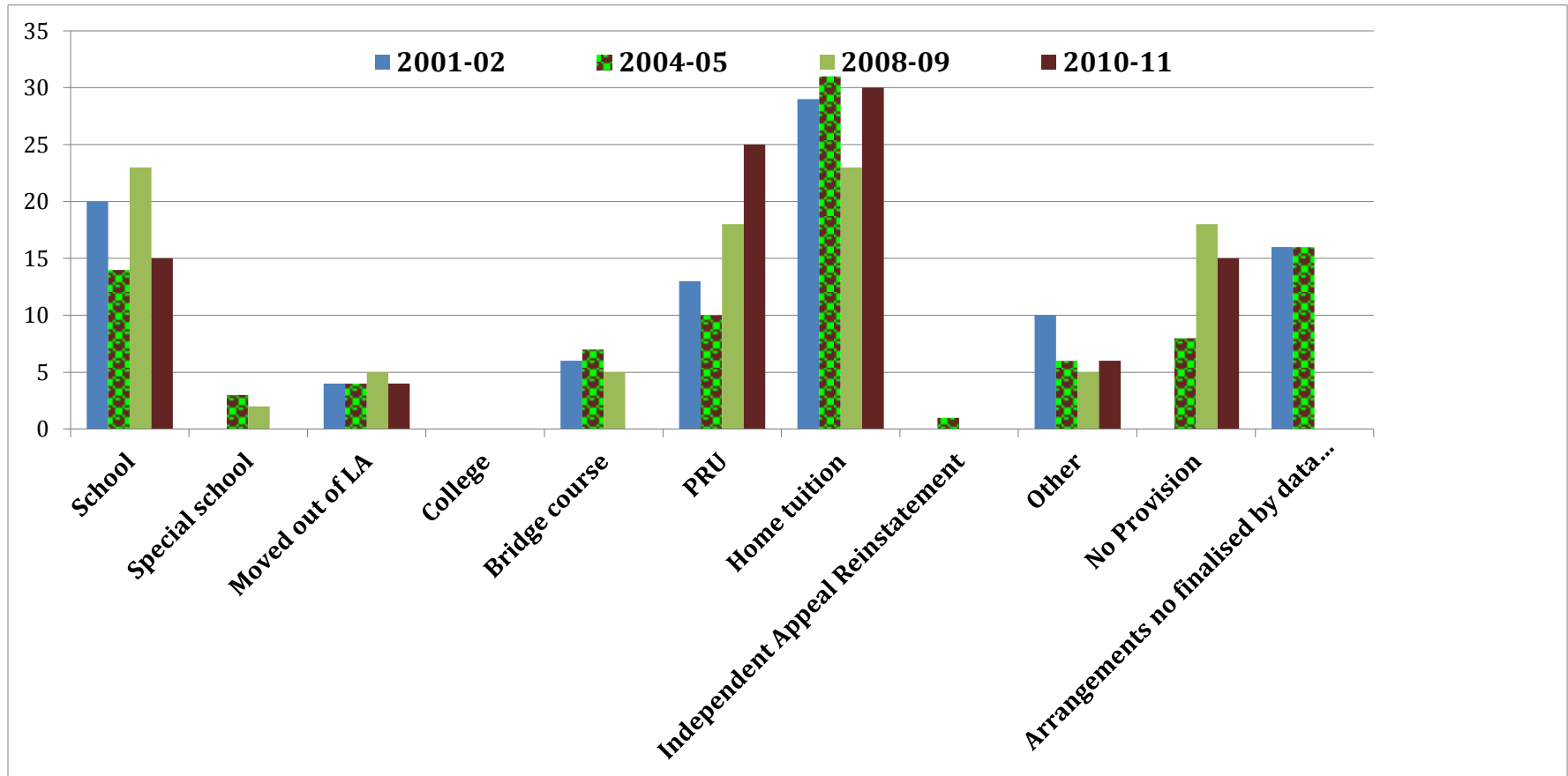
Reasons for exclusions, percentage, 2010-11



Findings: Education outside School (EOTAS)

- Nearly 90% of learners in EOTAS have special needs
- Nearly 70% are entitled to free school meals
- 75% of learners in EOTAS are male
- Provision is variable e.g. curriculum, hours per week, opportunities for success, accommodation,
- Most learners and families we spoke to were happy with the placement
- Use of restraint and physical isolation
- Reintegration rates improving

Provision for pupils permanently excluded from school, percentage over time



Discussion

- Improvements happening:
- Curriculum, focus on achievements, flexibility, communication between schools and local authorities

but issues remain:

- Disproportionate rates of exclusion
- Unlawful exclusion
- Use of restraint, and physical isolation
- Low levels of achievement

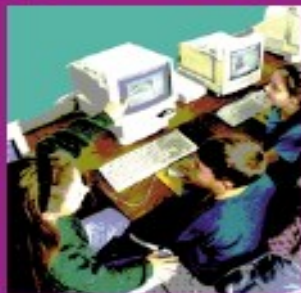
Who gets excluded from school?

- Male
- Living in poverty
- Age 13-15 years
- Looked after by the local authority
- Have special educational needs/additional support needs
- Have family who have experienced more ill health, trauma and bereavement than the norm
- Of African-Caribbean origin
- School-aged mothers
- Have a low level of educational attainment
- Of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage.



Children and Young People

A Framework for Partnership
- consultation document



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales

Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

www.cymru.gov.uk



Guidance

Guidance document No: 041/2010

Date of Issue: October 2010

Finally,

Exclusion from School:
compounding or tackling inequality??

Thank you

Contact

- Gillean.McCluskey@ed.ac.uk

References:

Butler, V. (2011) *Experiences of illegal school exclusions in Wales: a qualitative study*, Cardiff: Barnado's Cymru

Estyn (2011) *Joint Investigation into the handling and management of allegations of professional abuse and the arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children in education services in Pembrokeshire County Council*, Cardiff: CSSIW

McCluskey, G., Brown, J., Munn, P., Lloyd, G., Hamiton, L. Macleod, G. and Sharp, S. *'Take more time to actually listen': students' reflections on participation and negotiation in school*, British Educational Research Journal. DOI:10.1080/01411926.2012.659720.

Riddell, S. and McCluskey, G. (2012) 'Policy and provision for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in Scotland: Intersections of gender and deprivation' in Cole, T., Daniels, H. and Visser, J. (eds.) *The Routledge International Companion to Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* London: Routledge

Welsh Assembly Government (2008) *The National Behaviour and Attendance Review Report*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Assembly Government (2011) *Review of Education Otherwise Than at School and Action Plan*, Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government